

Record

THE BAPTIST

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

132:12
MS

Performing Arts Fest fills First, Clinton

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

SINCE 1877

20, 2008

VOL. 132

No. 12

MAR 25 2008



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

SMALL BAG, LONG POLE - Darren Casteel (right), of the Christian Creative Arts Association in Orlando, Fl., shows participants in his class at the 2008 Christian Performing Arts Festival at First Church, Clinton, how to make it appear a long wooden pole is emerging from a paper bag that seems too small to hold such a pole. The illusion was one of many that Casteel taught students in his Gospel Illusions class. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Passersby may have thought the circus had come to First Church, Clinton, with all the jolly clowns, colorful puppets, and balloon artists bouncing around the property. Actually, it was the 2008 edition of the Christian Performing Arts Festival, sponsored annually by the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department (DFM) of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

"We registered 798 participants this year," said Ken Hall, DFM student ministry consultant. "We brought in 30 conference leaders from Mississippi, Texas, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, and California. Cross Section, the Baptist Student Union drama group from Mississippi College, also performed and assisted with the festival."

Among the classes offered during the two-day conference were:

- Building a Program with a Storyline (puppets).
- Digital Camera Highlights (media).
- Advanced Ballooning (clowning).
- The Game Bag (recreation).
- Character Development (drama).
- Developing Leaders in Student Ministry (student ministry).



CLOWNING AROUND — Chuck Overby (left) of Meridian demonstrates a misdirection trick to attendees of his Building a Clown Presentation class at the 2008 Christian Performing Arts Festival at First Church, Clinton. Overby was one of 30 conference leaders who demonstrated performing arts techniques for nearly 800 participants. The Christian Performing Arts Festival is sponsored each year by the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

- Give Your Puppets Personality (puppets)
- Multimedia Software (media).
- Hospital Clowning (clowning).

• The Most Funniest Interactive Skits (recreation).

• Building Consistency in Bible Study (student ministry).

• Public speaking for the Nervous, Weak-Kneed, and the Nauseous (drama).

"The Christian Performing Arts Festival is one of top drawing festivals of its kind in the United States. I was impressed with how well it is organized and the caliber of the conference leaders and platform personalities that are brought in."

"Besides being inspired by the performing artists

and groups, participants had the opportunity to gain skills in the areas of drama, clowning, puppetry, and recreation which they could take back to their churches and use in many types of settings," Hall said.

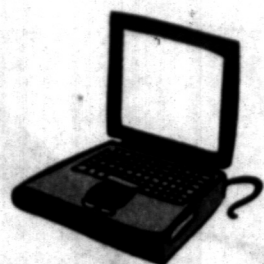
Myrna Gregory, a member of Pinelake Church, Brandon, coordinated the festival this year. The festival planning committee included Bobby Everett, a member of Parkway Church, Clinton; Martha Cannon, a member of Calvary Church, Batesville; and Perry Robbins, a member of Calvary Church, Columbia.

DFM Director Marcus Peagler commended Hall and the members of the festival leadership team who "worked diligently" to put together the 2008 event. "We appreciate the support of our churches — especially First Church, Clinton, for hosting. The growth in participation has been outstanding," he said.

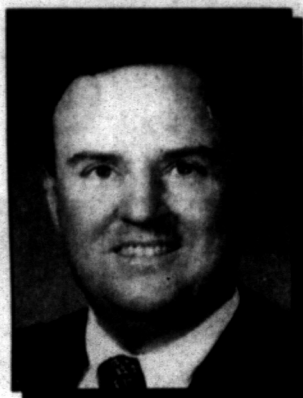
Next year's Christian Performing Arts Festival is scheduled for Feb. 27-28 at Ridgecrest Church, Madison.

For more information on the Christian Performing Arts Festival, contact Hall at Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3286 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 286. E-mail: khall@mbcb.org.





EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

EDITOR
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN
Dale Chain
Cain Lithographers

ADVERTISING
Dana Richardson
drichardson@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

EDITOR EMERITUS
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Marcus Bowers, Brandon
Jimmy McFatter, Amory
Billie Buckley, Petal
James Bates, Gulfport
Archie Herrin, Columbia
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Postmaster:
Send changes of address to: The
BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Send news, communication, and
address changes to: The Editor,
BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

VOLUME 132 • NUMBER 12
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$9.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.

Churches as scofflaws

Check out the sheet music storage rooms of many Mississippi Baptist churches, and you'll probably find any number of federal and state laws being broken. It's not because the churches are ongoing criminal enterprises; it's because they are lax in their understanding of copyright laws — or just don't care.

Either explanation can result in a world of trouble for those churches.

It's simply not legal to copy music at will. "The U.S. Copyright Law is designed to encourage the development of the arts and sciences by protecting the work of the creative individuals in our society — composers, authors, poets, dramatists, choreographers and others," according to the Music Publishers Association of the United States (MPAUS).

"It is essential to the future of printed music that the Copyright Law be upheld by all. Composers, arrangers, publishers and dealers are losing a significant percentage of their

income because of illegal photocopying," MPAUS says. "This loss of revenue ultimately means that less and less printed music is available on sale, short print runs mean higher prices for what is available, and dealers are no longer able to afford to carry large stocks of sheet music."

We've all heard about the recent cases of teenagers being sued and/or prosecuted for downloading copyrighted digital music to their computers, but duplicating sheet music on a church copier is just as illegal.

"Copyright owners have every right to prosecute offenders under the U.S.

Copyright Law," MPAUS points out. "To date, there have been a notable number of court decisions against individuals, churches, colleges, and other institutions for violations of the Copyright Law — some involving substantial fines."

Those fines can run as high as \$250,000 per incident, and the most flagrant violations of copyright laws could result in as much as five years imprisonment.

The following are expressly prohibited under U.S. copyright laws (and this is not a comprehensive list):

- Copying to avoid purchase.
- Copying music for any kind of performance (with strict emergency exceptions).
- Copying without including copyright notice.
- Copying to create anthologies or compilations.
- Reproducing material designed to be consumable such as workbooks, standardized tests, and answer sheets.
- Charging students beyond the actual cost involved in making legally-permitted copies.

The same copyright entitlements cover music on CDs and digital downloads (as several parents of teenagers have recently discovered the hard way). Modern copyright law is a complicated field that encompasses every new technology as it is introduced, so our churches would do well to keep up with the subject on at least an annual basis.

An interim music minister in a Mississippi Baptist church had the recent experience of discovering that virtually every copy of sheet music in the church he was serving was in violation of the law. Apparently, that had been the situation for some time and no thought had ever been given to the situation.

He promptly informed the church's astounded leadership of the problem and was allowed to destroy the illegal copies.

Would that small church have ever gotten caught? It doesn't really matter.

It doesn't matter if you think the music industry charges too much for their products. It doesn't matter if your church can't "afford" to purchase multiple copies of musical works. It doesn't matter if you don't know anyone or any church that has ever been prosecuted for copyright violations.

It doesn't matter how many decades the illegal copying has been going on. It doesn't matter what the legal opinion is of some lawyer wannabee in the church, or whether your church believes in separation of church and state.

It matters that you do the right thing. Of course you have the potential of getting caught. Unless your church has \$250,000 resting in the bank to pay the fines — or the responsible party has five years to spend in the federal pen — it might be a good idea to get up to date on copyright laws.

More than that, it's important the communities of lost people that surround every one of our churches know that we're honest people — followers of the One who expects us to be light in a dark world.

How can we be that light if we're stealing from others? Think about it.

Observers: Roe v. Wade days could be numbered

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Christian conservatives have a very good chance of seeing *Roe v. Wade* overturned if a pro-life president wins the White House this fall, two attorneys prominent in pro-family legal battles said March 10.

The comments by Liberty Counsel chairman Mathew Staver and Alliance Defense Fund chief counsel Benjamin Bull came during a panel discussion at the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Nashville, Tn.

The five-member panel covered a host of topics, including the ramifications of the general election.

"We are one breath away at the United States Supreme Court — one breath, one vote away — from overturning *Roe v. Wade* and stopping the killing of 1.5 million children every single year and stopping the slaughter of 50 million children since 1973," Staver said.

Both Staver and Bull said their comments were made as private citizens and not as representatives of their organization. "If the election goes the Christian conservative way, we have a chance of overturning

Roe v. Wade — a very strong chance," Bull said. "...We really can't paint a picture bleak enough to what it's going to look like [legally] if [Barack] Obama's in the White House."

The court's two oldest and two of its most liberal members, 87-year-old John Paul Stevens and 74-year-old Ruth Bader Ginsburg, support *Roe v. Wade*. Ginsburg, who will turn 75 Saturday, "is a cancer survivor and in very poor health and has to be helped in and out of her chair at times," Bull said.

Additionally, Bull said, 68-year-old Justice David Souter — who also supports *Roe* — has talked about retiring to his New Hampshire home, and 72-year-old Justice Antonin Scalia — a conservative who opposes *Roe* — has talked about retirement.

John McCain is pro-life on abortion, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton pro-choice.

"The question you have to ask yourself," Staver said, "is this, 'Would you want a Bill Clinton serving on the United States Supreme Court? Would you want a Hillary Clinton serving on the United States Supreme Court? If you don't want somebody like that, then vote accord-

ingly. [If Barack Obama wins or Hillary Clinton wins the presidency] we would lose the court not only on abortion but on marriage and on speech issues ... possibly for the rest of my life. So I think that is very critical."

Staver noted that Obama, when an Illinois legislator, opposed the Induced Infant Liability Act, which would have required medical attention be given to late-term babies who survived abortions. An Obama administration, Staver said, "would cataclysmically ... change the social underpinnings of this country."

Scalia and Justice Clarence Thomas are on record as opposing *Roe*, and pro-lifers are cautiously optimistic that Justice Samuel Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts — both nominees of President Bush — would vote to overturn *Roe* if given the chance. Five votes are required for a majority on the nine-member court.

On a different issue, panelist Janet Parshall also said that presumptive Republican nominee John McCain — whose success as the nominee has concerned some Christian leaders — led the charge last year to remove

an amendment to the defense authorization bill that would have expanded hate crimes protections to homosexuals and transgendered individuals.

"When it was all said and done, we finally got the amendment stripped on the House side by Duncan Hunter and the hero on the Senate side was John McCain," Parshall said. "He was the one who got it off on the Senate side."

On other issues: Parshall said McCain told a gathering of conservative leaders that he "absolutely" would work against bringing back the Fairness Doctrine, a former Federal Communications Commission law that governed broadcast content. She quoted McCain as saying he would do "everything in my power" to make sure it does not pass. Some Democrats in Congress support it.

Staver and Bull said they believe the California Supreme Court's upcoming decision on homosexual marriage will be a 4-3 split one way or the other, although they said they couldn't predict which side would win. A ruling is expected within three months.

Physician: teen girls at high risk for STDs

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Teenage girls particularly are at risk amid the permissive sex attitudes American culture has propagated for decades, leading to an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), a Southern Baptist physician told Baptist Press.

Don Buckley, a family physician in Pensacola, Fla., said a study released March 11 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "confirms the tragic stories that we in primary care hear virtually every day."

The study found that at least one in four girls between the ages of 14-19 nationwide is infected with a sexually transmitted disease, amounting to 3.2 million youth.

Richard Ross, co-founder of the True Love Waits (TLW) movement, said churches are "getting lazy" in promoting abstinence as the only safe method in preventing the spread of STDs, teen pregnancy and a myriad of challenges that can stem from premature sex.

"Teen sexual activity rose for 20 straight years, from 1973-1993," Ross told Baptist Press. "True Love Waits started in 1993. Since then, teen sexual activity has dropped for 14 unbroken years but in 2008, there has been a slight uptick. If the church is not vigilant, we will go right back where we were."

As evidence that some churches have become lax in their efforts at curbing teen sex, Ross said he has spoken with numerous pastors who have said their churches present the True Love Waits abstinence challenge only once every three or four years.

Red alert

"We need a red alert to jar pastors and youth ministers out of their complacency," Ross, a professor of student ministry at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said. "They think the stats will just continue to drop on their own, and 2008 proves that is not the case."

Daniel Heimbach, a professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., said his main concern with the CDC statistics on STD rates is "the indication of the lack of any sense of personal responsibility and the cheapening of sex and relationships, and the implication that has not only for individuals but for the culture as a whole."

Heimbach, like Buckley and Ross, said the solution to the alarming statistics is an increased emphasis on sexual abstinence among the nation's youth.

"It shows the erosion of the moral foundations of our society and culture, which is by God's grace protected by sexual standards that God gives in terms of saving sex for marriage," Heimbach, author of *True Sexual Morality: Recovering Biblical Standards for a Culture in Crisis*, said of the study.

"This is obviously an indicator of the huge number of people — in this case girls, but it obviously takes boys as well — that are engaging in sexual activity in very immoral and unprotected ways, unprotected morally and unprotected health-wise," Heimbach said. "This is a disaster in the making, and the only answer is to respect and uphold God's standards and be kind to others in the process but say, 'You're heading on a road toward destruction.'"

Repetition works

Ross said one of the most effective ways for churches to lead in efforts to save youth from the harmful consequences of premarital sex is to introduce them to the abstinence message through an emphasis like a True Love Waits dedication ceremony. Such services, he said, need to be held on a yearly basis in order to reach as many youth as possible.

"Perhaps church leaders shy away from an annual promise ceremony because they don't want to ask a student to sign six cards while young," Ross said, referring to the pledge cards that students sign promising to abstain from sexual activity until marriage. "They have missed the point. We never ask teenagers to make multiple promises."

"In fact, it offends Christian students when they are asked to promise again," Ross said. "In their minds, their original promise was a promise to God and that promise stands to their wedding day and beyond."

The annual invitation to participate in a True Love Waits promise ceremony, Ross said, should be made to middle school students recently promoted into the student ministry department, to all students who have committed their lives to Christ during the past year, and to students who have joined the church and have no background with the abstinence movement.

"Students who have made promises in previous years participate in Bible teaching on purity and they attend the ceremony to support the first-

timers, but no one places yet another card in their hands," Ross said. The idea that promoting abstinence through a commitment service every few years is enough must be corrected, he said.

"Few churches highlight international missions only once every few years. Few would decide to offer Vacation Bible School only once every few years. Churches give annual attention to those initiatives because they have Kingdom importance," Ross told BP. "Those initiatives matter in people's lives in the same way that a lifestyle of absolute purity matters."

"If we are vigilant, the statistics will continue to improve," he added. "If we are not, all the tragedies that attend teen sex will increasingly be part of our families, churches and nation."

Abstinence: the major message

Buckley, from a physician's perspective, said abstinence needs to be the major message for youth, especially given that teenage girls' bodies are particularly susceptible to STDs because of factors accompanying their physical development.

"There is no fool-proof safe sex practice outside of a monogamous marital relationship," Buckley said. "There is in this fallen world a place for things such as HPV vaccinations, but that is not our primary message. Our goal is sexual purity and abstinence before marriage."

Regarding the physical implications of girls being infected with an STD, Buckley said one chlamydia infection gives a woman a 25% chance of infertility.

"About 30% of infertility is due to scarring of the fallopian tubes, and about half of those cases are due to chlamydia," Buckley said. "Chlamydia is often a silent sexually transmitted disease. You may not even recognize an infection sometimes."

Buckley also said it's a myth to say that condoms are an effective prevention method against certain STDs.

"It's kind of ridiculous to think that condoms are the answer when condoms have a 25% failure rate for preventing pregnancy. They're not the answer." The standard, Buckley reiterated, is abstinence — "sexual purity before marriage and maintaining a monogamous marriage relationship."

For more information on True Love Waits, a ministry of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, visit the website at www.lifeway.com/tlw.

Archbishop killed

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Chaldean Catholic Christians in Mosul, Iraq, are mourning the death of Paulos Faraj Rahho, an archbishop who was kidnapped Feb. 28. His funeral was held March 14, the day after his body was found in a shallow grave in a neighborhood known for its links to Al Qaeda terrorists. Rahho's two bodyguards were shot and killed during the Feb. 28 kidnapping, which occurred as the archbishop was leaving church after celebrating a Way of the Cross mass. Islamic extremist violence against Iraq's dwindling Christian community has been a serious problem, according to the human rights group Christian Solidarity International. Six people were wounded in January when nine houses of worship were bombed in Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk. A priest and two deacons were killed in June 2007 outside the same church Rahho was leaving when he was kidnapped, and a Syrian Orthodox priest was murdered in Iraq in November 2006. Tens of thousands — perhaps hundreds of thousands — of Christians have fled Iraq since U.S.-led Operation Iraqi Freedom deposed Saddam Hussein in March 2003. The Chaldean church is an autonomous Eastern-rite group that is aligned with the Roman Catholic Church and recognizes the authority of the pope. The Chaldean Christian community has lived in the region since the second century A.D. It worships in Syriac, a language related to the Aramaic tongue spoken by Jesus.

Looking back

10 years ago

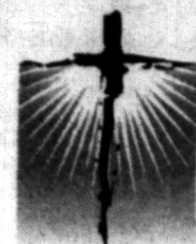
The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering will become a trademark of the Woman's Missionary Union, and all funds raised through the offering will continue to be used exclusively for work of the North American Mission Board under an agreement between the two organizations.

20 years ago

Hollis and Eunice Bryant of Clinton are honored by the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board during a meeting in Kansas City. Hollis was named state Interfaith Witness Coordinator of the Year, and Eunice was named Interfaith Witness Associate of the Year.

50 years ago

In colorful ceremonies marked by dignity and simplicity, R.A. McLemore is officially inducted as the 16th president of Mississippi College (MC). McLemore enjoys the first official inauguration of a president in the history of the Baptist-affiliated school.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

MARCH 20, 2008

VOL. 132

No. 12



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

EASTER: IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT EMPTY THINGS

As a Christian, it is virtually impossible to think about Easter without thinking about the empty tomb. Following the crucifixion and those three days in the grave, even people who may not know where it is found in the Bible can quote the verse that says, "He is not here, for he has risen as he said" (Matt. 28:6). For all of us who have watched death claim one of our loved ones or who have wrestled with the reality of our own mortality, the empty tomb and the promise that ours will be empty also is a magnificent truth. It is the pinnacle promise given to us from the living Christ. It punctuates the Easter experience. In His own wonderful words Jesus said, "Because I live ye shall live also" (John 14:19b). His tomb is forever empty, and I am forever thankful. This year as we approach Easter, stop and think about what is filled rather than about what is empty.

I am so thankful that the cross was filled at Easter. Filled you might ask? Absolutely, because when Jesus hung on that cross on that first Easter Good Friday, the cross was filled with Jesus, someone who could do something about my sins. He had His life filled with all of my sins.

Literally, as the Scripture says, "He who knew no sin became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God through Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). When Jesus died on the cross, all of my sin — its pain, its guilt, its grief, and its consequences — were placed on Him. He died for my sins. If He had only died for me it would



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

have been an enormous load of sin, but it was not just for me. It was for you. It was for every one of us and so the payment of sin and its stark reality was made by someone who never ever sinned. The cross was filled at Golgotha on that Easter when Jesus took all of our sins on Him.

Have you ever just stopped and contemplated the enormity of one exposed sin? As long as sin is hidden, unrevealed, and unexposed, it may appear to be cute, just fashionably temporary, or at its worst, manageable. Any sin when it is known suddenly becomes indescribably painful. Choose any sin you wish and watch it when it becomes known to others and there is no longer anything about it that is fun, enjoyable, or uplifting. At that glorious first Easter, God gathered all of our sins and placed them on the broken, crucified Christ. The cross was filled.

I am also thankful at Easter that a heart can be filled. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice I will come into him and sup with him and he with me." I know the picture there is of a church. The church is people. Because of Easter, Jesus offers to come and live within us and to fill our hearts. Over the past few

weeks, I have seen a number of people invite Jesus to come and live in their hearts. True to His word and His offer, He came. Though I cannot tell you how many times I have seen that take place, it is still amazing to me how the Lord comes in power and love and fills the human heart. He transforms their hearts and gives them hope and life everlasting. He came out of the tomb to come into our hearts.

Easter is also about the fact that He fills our homes. I know that for many people Easter is a kind of religious event with a lot of theological discussion about life, death, and suffering, but by the power of the resurrection, a living Christ comes to change everything for us. One of the marvelous transformations He brings is to our homes. I do not know of any family that does not have challenges, uncertainties, occasional misunderstandings, and even conflicts, but Jesus fills our homes with His life, peace, joy, and understanding. Where

do you turn when trials come to your family, when unexpected calamities strike, when misunderstandings produce anger, and anger brings about bitterness? Where can you turn? Jesus can fill a home with love in a way that no other philosophy or attempts at improving behavior patterns can even touch. He is the Savior not only of our hearts but also of our homes. He fills them with new days and new ways.

Finally, I am so thankful that Easter points us to heaven being filled. The here and now is not all that there is. For those who may think that Easter is simply about the by and by and pie in the sky they are wrong. For sure, heaven is real and Jesus promises us that we can join Him there. He wants to fill up heaven with folks like you, me, our family members, our friends, and even our foes. He came to give His life and to open wide the door and let every one come and live forever and ever. The price has been paid for your eternity. The place is being made ready if you know Jesus. He will be ready for you. As you sing and celebrate this Easter, give thanks for what is empty, but also give thanks and praise to Him that Easter is a time we rejoice in what is filled.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.

MS POSITIONS

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, VICKSBURG, Miss., seeking individual for full-time minister of music/education. Please send resume to Immanuel Baptist Church, attn: personnel committee, 6949 Hwy 61 South, Vicksburg, MS 39180. Or email to IBC_personnel@yahoo.com or contact Michael Bull at (601) 218-5325.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC/YOUTH. Parkview Baptist Church, Greenville, MS is seeking a full-time minister of music and/or youth. Please send resume to Personnel Committee, 712 McAllister Street, Greenville, MS 38701 or email to parkviewp@bellsouth.net.

FBC OLOH, is currently accepting resumes for full-time pastor. Please submit resumes to FBC Oloh, attn: pastor search committee, 36 Oloh Church Road, Sumrall, MS. 39482.

FBC ROLLING FORK, MISS., is seeking a full-time or part-time minister of music. Position includes salary and house. Youth experience would also be helpful but not necessary. Please send resumes to Andy Anderson, FBC, of Rolling Fork, 73 North Second Street, Rolling Fork, MS 39159.

NORTH MCCOMB BAPTIST CHURCH, is seeking an interim or permanent part-time youth pastor. Send resume to 504 Laurel Street, McComb, MS 39648. Or contact the church office at (601) 684-5214.s

PART-TIME SECRETARIAL POSITION available for a local Baptist church, 20-24 hours a week. Please fax resume to (601) 992-6393.

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MISS., is currently

accepting resumes for a full-time minister of music/outreach. Please send resumes to 749 North Jackson Street, Brookhaven, MS 39601. Or email to questions@cbcbrookhaven.org.

SEEKING PART-TIME MINISTER OF STUDENTS. Those interested in this position or the interim position should contact Pineview Baptist Church, Clinton, Miss., at (601) 924-7677. Fax resumes to (601) 924-8378. Or email pineviewbc@bellsouth.net.

NORTH COLUMBIA BAPTIST CHURCH is searching for a minister of music/education. Send resume to North Columbia Baptist Church, P. O. Box 271, Columbia, MS 39429 or e-mail to ncbcl@hotmail.com.

WEST UNION BAPTIST CHURCH is accepting resumes for a part-time minister of music. We are located in south MS, about 40 minutes from New Orleans Seminary. If interested, please mail your resume to West Union Baptist Church, 560 W Union Rd., Carriere, MS 39426, attn: music search committee.

HARRISBURG BAPTIST CHURCH, TUPELO, Miss., is now receiving resumes for the staff position of director of preschool ministries. Please send resumes to 4675 Cliff Gookin Blvd., Tupelo, MS 38801. Or email to sgordon@harrisburgonline.org.

FAIRFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH, MOSELLE, Miss., is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resume with references to Fairfield Baptist Church, c/o Ramsey Coutta, 942 Moselle-Seminary Rd., Moselle, MS 39459.

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FBC, MONROE, LOUISIANA is seeking a full-time minister of music gifted in leading a blended worship service

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A HEALTHY, GROWING CHURCH looking for a full-time children's director to work with 200 kids. Send resume to Vicki Brantly at vnbrantly@hotmail.com, or East Side Baptist Church, 718 E. Ninth St., Mountain Home, AR 72653.

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FBC THOMSON, GEORGIA, is seeking a full-time minister of education/family ministries. For job description, see www.first-baptistthomson.org/meducation.html. Send resumes to personnel committee, c/o Dr. Jim Ramsey, pastor, P.O. Box 1205, Thomson, GA 30824.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

March 20, 2008

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



VBS Leadership Trainings are back for '08!

April 21, North Oxford, Oxford

FBC, Louisville

FBC, Natchez

April 22, Gaston, Booneville

FBC, Belzoni

FBC, Purvis

April 24, Clarksdale, Clarksdale

FBC, Meridian

Schedule for all conferences:
6:30 p.m. Worship rally
7-9 p.m. Conference

CONFERENCES OFFERED

Outrigger Island

Younger Preschool Conference
Older Preschool Conference
Younger Children's Conference
Middle Children's Conference
Older Children's Conference
Youth Conference
Adult Conference
Pastor/Evangelism Conference
General Officer Conference
Special Ministries Conference
Children's Rotation:
Missions, Music, Crafts, Snacks

Club VBS - Cactus Canyon

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SEND YOUR CHURCH VBS LEADERSHIP TO BE A PART OF THIS EXCITING EVENT. WE GUARANTEE A FUN TIME OF FELLOWSHIP.

To register or for more information, contact Angie Boydston, Preschool/Children's Consultant with the Sunday School Dept. at 601.292.3294 or 1.800.748.1651, ext 294, or by E-mail aboydstun@mbcb.org

Garaywa Camp and Conference Center NEEDS CAMP NURSES!

We couldn't make it through the summer without a nurse to help care for us, but good nurses are hard to come by. If you know of nurses (RN, LPN, or retired nurses) in your church or association who could serve one or more weeks (Monday-Friday) during the summer, please contact Erica Harms at 1-800-748-1561, ext. 315, 601-292-3315, or E-mail Erica at eharms@mbcb.org.



HeartSong Camp

June 23-27

William Carey University, Hattiesburg
7 - 12 grades

A summer camp experience where your students can worship and communicate the gospel through

Praise Band, Praise Team,
Art, Choral Singing, Signing,
Drama, Banner Making,
Playing Instruments, Voice,
Keyboard, Guitar,
Part-singing, Interpretive Movement

and Discover, Develop and Use many of the talents God has given them.

For registration and program information: Church Music Department 1-800-748-1651, ext. 274, or 601-292-3274 or E-mail: scluttrell@mbcb.org
HeartSong preview DVD available



Mississippi wMu Associational Missions Leadership Training

April 18-19, 2008

Garaywa Camp & Conference Center

Registration of lodging and meals required.

Call Lisa Miller in the MS wMu office for registration form - 601-292-3317.

Called to Love ...

Amazing Grace

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, APRIL 18

1:30 - 2:00 General Assembly
2:15 - 3:15 Session 1 - Conferences
3:30 - 4:30 Session 2 - Conferences
4:30 - 5:00 Free time with options
5:00 - 6:00 Dinner
6:15 - 7:00 Worship Celebration
7:15 - 8:45 Session 3 - Conferences
9:00 Fellowship

SATURDAY, APRIL 19

7:30 - 8:30 Breakfast with Missions Moments
8:45 - 9:45 Session 4 - Conferences
9:45 - 10:00 Break
10:00 - 11:00 Session 5 - Conferences
11:15 - noon Session 6 - Idea Swap
12:15 - 1:30 Lunch & Commissioning of Associational Teams
1:30 - 3:00 Optional planning - Associational Team planning on your own.

FINANCIAL

Services

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

2008 Compensation Survey

Very Important for ALL Churches!

www.lifeway.com/compensationsurvey

Complete by April 15

Paper surveys are available for churches without internet connections. Contact Carol Taylor or Robin D. Nichols for information - Financial Services, "Retirement," 1.800.748.1651.

New IRS regulations concern churches

(a) a policy statement for retirement plans
(b) severance packages for staff members that carry into a new calendar year

GuideStone Financial Resources will communicate with churches.

Super
Summer
08

July 14-18, 2008
Mississippi College

SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STUDENTS
UNITE WITH ONE VOICE AND PASSION.

PREPARE. WORSHIP. GO.

COLLEGE WORKERS SUMMIT

(for all church volunteers and staff who work with college students)

may 3, 2008 mississippi baptist
convention board

Featuring: Linda Osborne (collegiate specialist, LifeWay).
Collegiate representatives from the International Mission Board &
North American Mission Board, and Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.
For more information, contact Christy Carney at MBCC: 601-988-3800

2008 PREACHING CONFERENCE

FEATURED
PRESENTER
Jerry Songer
Interim pastor
First Baptist Church
Orangeburg, S.C.

Monday, April 21
First Baptist Church
Louisville

Tuesday, April 22
First Baptist Church
Natchez

For more information, contact:
(601) 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651,
ext. 305, or kmcdonnell@mbcb.org

WORKSHOPS

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Camera Operation
Don Moore and
David Bunger

Getting Started on
the Web
J.C. Howell

How Did They
Do That?
(1 hour session for
everyone)

Creative Production
Led by Don Moore
and David Bunger

Sound Advice Basic
Trooper Hales

Sound Advice
Advanced
Trooper Hales

Advanced
Web Site Design
J.C. Howell

Non-Linear Editing
for Weekly Church
Broadcast
Lynn Bullock

Projection
Systems
Forum

Me? The Director?
Lynn Bullock

Hot Topics Discussions for Student Ministers

"Hanging on when the bottom drops out"

Allen Jackson, NOBTS (Clarksdale & Harrisburg)

Ken Hall, MBCB (McLaurin Heights, Brookhaven & Wiggins)

"The student ministers role in Sunday School"

Bruce Edwards, Tennessee Baptist
Convention (Clarksdale & Harrisburg)

Andy Mullins, Student Minister, MHBC
(McLaurin Heights, Brookhaven & Wiggins)

Monday, May 12, Clarksdale BC
Tuesday, May 13, Harrisburg BC, Tupelo
Monday, May 19, McLaurin Heights BC, Pearl
Tuesday, May 20, FBC, Brookhaven
Thursday, May 22, FBC, Wiggins

Schedule (all locations)		7:30	Break
6:00 p.m.	Light Supper	7:45	Session II
6:30	Session I	8:45	Dismiss

For info, contact the Sunday School Dept.: 601-292-3320,
1-800-748-1651, ext. 320, or hdedmon@mbcb.org

Contact Communication Services for more info: 601-292-3378, 1-800-748-1651 or jchen@mbcb.org

State Bible Drill Locations

for children (grades 4-6) and youth (grades 7-12)



DATES	LOCATIONS	REGISTRATION*
April 7	Picayune, FBC Hernando, Hernando BC	2-5 p.m. 2-5 p.m.
April 8	McComb, FBC Batesville, FBC	2-5 p.m. 2-5 p.m.
April 10	Tupelo, FBC Tupelo, Harrisburg BC	2-5 p.m. 2-5 p.m.
April 11	Starkville, FBC	2-5 p.m.
April 12	Clinton, Parkway BC Madison, FBC	9 a.m.-noon 9 a.m.-noon
April 14	Hattiesburg, Temple BC [West] Meridian, Poplar Springs Dr. BC	2-5 p.m. 2-5 p.m.
April 15	Laurel, Salem Heights BC	2-5 p.m.
April 17	Greenwood, FBC	2-5 p.m.
April 19	Selection Tournament Clinton, FBC	noon
April 26	Speakers Tournament Blue Mountain College	9 a.m.

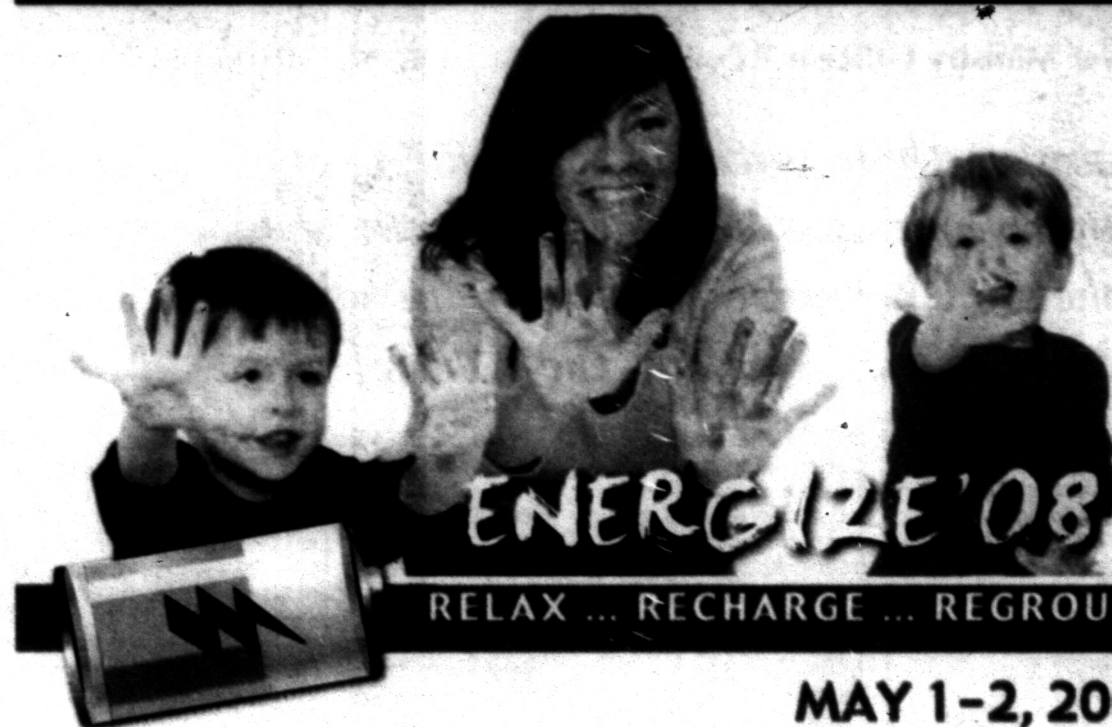
* A helpful hint - Those who register for State Bible Drills during the second half of the registration period usually have a shorter wait.

If you have questions contact:

The Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
1-800-748-1651
dbrashier@mbcb.org
Fax: 601-714-7432

Please send your Church Report Forms to the fax number above or to PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205. Church Report Forms for Children's and Youth Bible Drill are found on the cover of the Church Bible Drill Packs and should be mailed after your Associational Bible Drills. Church Report Forms for Bible Buddies and Adult Bible Drill are in this year's pamphlets. We have certificates for all Bible Drillers (Children, Youth, and Adult) and for Bible Buddies which we will send in response to your church report forms.

PRESCHOOL & CHILDREN'S MINISTER RETREAT



MAY 1-2, 2008

**Patterson Place / Camp Garaywa
Registration, Thursday / 1 p.m.**

**Conference begins at 1:30 p.m. on
Thursday and ends at noon on Friday**

Topics & Activities include:

- Balancing Life with Ministry
- Creative Ways to Communicate in Today's World
- Forum to share with other ministers
- Fellowship activities for networking

For more info, contact the Sunday School Department: 601-292-3294 or aboydstun@mbcb.org

"Setting the Pace"

Pastor
Minister of Education
Sunday School Director



This strategic conference will be led by **LAWRENCE PHIPPS**, pastor of Vaughn Forest Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., and **DANIEL EDMONDS**, State Sunday School director for Alabama Baptist State Convention.

LAWRENCE and Daniel have worked together to mold Vaughn Forest Baptist Church into one of the fastest growing churches in the state of Alabama.

Come hear these dynamic leaders explain the power of working as a team, setting the pace to make Sunday School

THE Growth Agent of the church.

Phipps and Edmonds co-authored **Growing Sunday School TEAMS: A Practical Guide to Building Bible Study Groups in the Church.**

Provided at no cost to all registered conference participants:

- a complimentary dinner beginning promptly at 6 p.m.
- the book **Growing Sunday School TEAMS: A Practical Guide to Building Bible Study Groups in the Church**

Growing Sunday School TEAMS: A Practical Guide to Building Bible Study Groups in the Church

For more information, contact the Sunday School Department: 601-292-3291 or 1-800-748-1651, ext. 291, or E-mail cday@mbcb.org.

Monday, May 5

First Baptist Church, Columbus

Tuesday, May 6

First Baptist Church, Brookhaven

Pray this day for...

March 21-April 3, 2008

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life ..." Philippians 2:14-16a

Albanian Ghag of Southern Europe. Team SAGE asks, "Pray for relationships that we are continuing to develop with F.E. and others. We ask for openness while sharing."

Continue praying for the salvation of heads of households among the Bihri Muslims of Bangladesh. A church planter recently had the opportunity to share God's Word with a number of older Bihari men who are literate in Urdu and Bengali. Please pray that these men will come to faith.

In 2008, the missionaries of Central, Eastern and Southern Africa will meet together in regional sections at meetings rather than at a local level. Begin now praying for the planning of these important times to equip, encourage, challenge and celebrate with the missionary personnel.

The Sri Lanka team was prayerwalking a village one day, seeking God's "person of peace." Two small boys called to them to come and eat mangoes at their house. They were warmly welcomed and shared the gospel with them. When they visited the next week, the mother of the boys accepted the Truth!

Pray for the leaders of Friends of Jesus Clubs in the Durban, South Africa area. Several new clubs are being planned to be led by nationals as well as by some of the missionaries. Pray that the children will be eager to come and learn about the best friend they can ever have, Jesus!

Praise the Lord for a new believer in SE Asia who is passionately sharing the treasure he has found with others! He was healed after a believing friend prayed for him. He committed his life to Christ. Since that time he has won his family-wife and seven children to faith.

The Morogoro Urban Team requests prayer for "True Love Waits" as they plan many programs and seminars this year in schools using those who have been trained in the Morogoro region. Pray for some "new blood" of people who believe that abstinence is the way to stop the spread of AIDS.

Pray that the Lord will call laborers to serve in Southern Sudan. Millions there have never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ in a culturally appropriate way. Pray that the Sudanese believers will be burdened to be active evangelists, committed to training many in the faith within their country.

Church Library Ministry Retreat, Garaywa, 27th - 29th. Pray that: (1) The Holy Spirit anoint and guide the leaders; (2) Those attending be refreshed and renewed in their walk with Christ; (3) God gives them a clear vision of His desire and purpose for their specific church's library ministry.

Praise God for Suzhou, China, where the work of sharing the gospel and multiplying churches has grown in recent years. A number of new believers and new churches have been started. Still there are literally millions in this city who have not yet found the hope that is found only in Jesus Christ.

(1) Pray for President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana (western Africa, between Core d' Ivoire and Togo); (2) The Quiche Association of churches among the Quiche. Petition the Lord's help for the Quiche leadership to internalize the vision in order to reach their own people for the Lord.

Pray for the biblical counseling training and ministry that will be started in the Northwest Mexico City area. Ask God to raise up a great team of counselors to reach those who need the gospel and the wisdom of Scripture in their lives.

Young Pastors Retreat, Lake Tiak O'Khata, 28th-29th. Pray that: (1) Young pastors be willing to learn what seasoned ministers can teach them; (2) They would seek the Lord's guidance in every area of their ministry; (3) Leaders be sensitive to young pastors' needs and address them appropriately.

Buddhist Korean parents pray before Gathawi, a Buddha-shaped stone sculpture on Mt. Paigong in Daegu, for their children before national exams, believing that Gathawi is able to answer. Pray for God's truth to come to these concerned Korean parents who are desiring the best for their children.



Mississippi Family **FEST** on the Gulf Coast July 26-30, 2008

Location: Jackson County

Cost: \$25 per person (\$50 maximum for immediate family members), includes program fee, t-shirt, breakfast and lunch meals, plus dinner on Wednesday evening.

Types of Ministries: Light Construction/Painting, Community Service & Outreach, Children's Ministries, Acts of Kindness

How to Register: Request a registration packet by calling MS WMU at 800-748-1651, ext. 317, or E-mail lmiller@mbcb.org.

This event is co-sponsored by the Family Ministry Team, Men's Ministry, Mississippi WMU, Jackson Association, and participating local churches.

For more information, please contact Don Gann (dgann@mbcb.org) in Men's Ministry or Tammy Anderson (tanderson@mbcb.org) in Mississippi WMU at 800-748-1651.

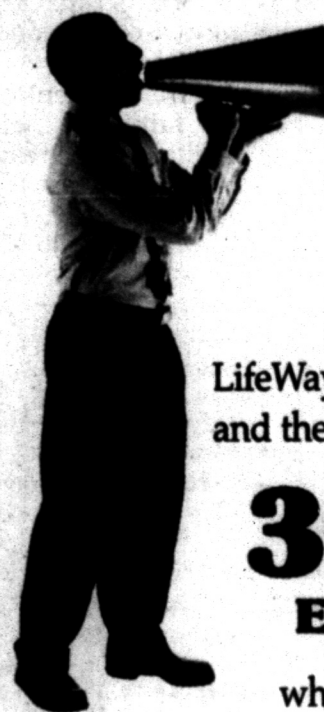
MMF & MPF Retreat - April 18-19 GARAYWA

Macedonian Call
Friday, 11 a.m.

Missionary Parents Fellowship (MPF)
Friday, 2 p.m. - Saturday, 12:30 p.m.

Mississippi Missionary Fellowship
Saturday, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Register with Alicia Dungan, 601-924-7034 or adungan@mbcb.org



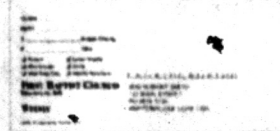
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HOUSE TOPS

'Southern Baptist' statement, isn't really

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — Jonathan Merritt, a 25-year-old student at Southeastern in Wake Forest, N.C., captured widespread media attention March 10 in releasing a statement titled, A Southern Baptist Declaration on the Environment and Climate Change.

The so-called "Southern Baptist" statement is not an initiative of the Southern Baptist Convention, which voiced its views on global warming last summer in a resolution, "On Global Warming".

However, the student's project carries the names of a number of high-profile Southern Baptist leaders including his father, James Merritt, pastor of Cross Pointe, the Church at Gwinnett Center in Duluth, Ga., and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Frank Page, pastor of First Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C., and the current SBC president, and Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, and a past president of the SBC, also signed the document.

Although he signed Merritt's declaration, Page, in a statement to Baptist Press, voiced support for the 2007 SBC resolution and earlier SBC resolutions on the topic.

"Southern Baptists have long stood for a clear environmental message which takes seriously God's call to guard and keep the earth," Page said. "We have been balanced and responsive in our calls for care..."

"However, in a broader sense, many of God's people have been timid about speaking out regarding issues which relate to environmentalism. Perhaps this timidity has been a fear that speaking out would tie us to the very extreme left wing liberal environmental lobby. Some in this group are known for harsh political tirades. Others have issued irresponsible calls for economic change which would devastate the economies of some of the poorest nations in the world."

Origin of document

In a teleconference with media March 10, Merritt said the idea for the initiative came to him during a theology class.

"In the lecture," he said, "my professor made the statement that when we destroy creation, which is God's revelation, it is no different than tearing a page out of the Bible. At that moment, God began to work in my heart and call me to do something. [This document] is the product of that nudge from God that day."

Merritt has been identified as the project director of the Southern Baptist Environment and Climate Initiative, which is behind the document.

Editors of state Baptist newspapers received facsimile transmissions from an Atlanta public relations firm offering to set up interviews with the document's principals, but not identifying who had hired the firm. A web site has also been created to push the document.

The declaration, which carries 46 signatures, says Southern Baptists' "current denominational engagement with these issues [has] often been too timid, failing to produce a unified moral voice. Our cautious response to these issues in the face of mounting evidence may be seen by the world as uncaring, reckless and ill-informed. We can do better."

The declaration released March 10 offers four main points:

— Human beings have a responsibility to care for creation and acknowledge their participation in environmental decline.

— Addressing climate change is prudent.

— Stewardship of the earth is required by Christian and Southern Baptist beliefs.

— Individuals, churches, communities and governments should act now.

The statement included the disclaimer that advocacy of environmental stewardship will not reduce the signers' commitment to protecting unborn and other human life or to the biblical view of marriage.

"We will never compromise our convictions nor attenuate our advocacy on these matters, which constitute the most pressing moral issues of our day," the statement says. "However, we are not a single-issue body."

Missing endorsement

One of the most glaring missing endorsements was that of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC).

During the teleconference, Merritt mentioned that the ERLC had provided helpful inputs to reshape the statement but in the end did not endorse the final draft.

In a statement to Baptist Press, ERLC President Richard Land said he declined to endorse Merritt's declaration out of respect for Southern Baptists' autonomy.

"They reserve to themselves the right to decide through Convention action what the Southern Baptist Convention's public policy positions are to be," Land said. "The ERLC will continue to share the officially adopted positions of the Convention with public policy makers and the media."

Land also took issue with the signers' statement that Southern Baptists have been "too timid" in addressing these issues.

"[T]he Convention has officially addressed the issues of creation care and environmental stewardship in its 2006 and 2007 Conventions through resolutions adopted by the Convention's duly elected messengers," Land said. Referring to the 2007 action, he added that the approved action "is as close to an 'official' position as the SBC is capable of making, apart from its formal confession of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message."

"Consequently, in our convention-assigned role to share faithfully with Washington and other public policy venues where the convention is on an issue, it would be misleading and unethical of the ERLC to promote a position at variance with the convention's expressly stated positions."

While some media reports interpreted the declaration as a major shift of position in Southern Baptist circles, the document actually builds on statements adopted in the past, Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Seminary, said during the teleconference.

"What the statement does is in concert with what Southern Baptists have said," Akin said. "The difference is that this comes as a grass-roots movement, not through the mechanism of a resolution that comes when the convention is in session. It does challenge Southern Baptists to be more proactive," he added. "I see it as building on what Southern Baptists have said in previous statements and position papers."

Official stance

Southern Baptist messengers, in speaking to the issue of global warming during the 2007 annual meeting in San Antonio, encouraged their fellow Southern Baptists "to proceed cautiously in the human-induced global warming debate in light of conflicting scientific research." It also called for public policies that guarantee "an appropriate balance between care for the environment, effects on economics, and impacts on the poor when considering programs to reduce" carbon and other emissions.

The resolution affirmed Southern Baptists' responsibility to protect the environment while urging caution in the debate over humanity's role in global warming.

Messengers to the 2007 convention

voted to delete two paragraphs of recommendations that were in the global warming measure when it came from the Resolutions Committee. They approved an amendment from the floor that removed proposals for government funding to do research on the human impact on global warming and to find energy alternatives to oil and other carbon-producing resources. Messengers passed the amendment with about 60% in the majority before approving the resolution overwhelmingly.

Last year's SBC resolution, which cited the Bible and offered a scientific and historical summary of climate change, is the seventh since 1970 to affirm that Christians have a responsibility to be stewards of creation.

Differences of opinion

Evangelical Christians have expressed differences of opinion on how to address global warming.

The Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI), a coalition of more than 100 evangelical leaders, contends human beings are the main cause of global warming, which it says will negatively impact poor people the most. The ECI, which issued a statement in February 2006, has endorsed legislation to decrease carbon dioxide emissions in an effort to combat climate change.

The Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation says the cause of global warming is uncertain. It has expressed concern about the effects that policies proposed by those who believe in human-induced climate change would have on the poor. Some proposals might make little difference in the environment while harming economic progress, especially for the needy, it fears. The Cornwall Alliance released a document in July 2006 that was partly a response to ECI's statement and was signed by more than 170 mostly evangelical scientists, economists and ethicists. Barrett Duke, the ERLC's vice president of public policy and research, has endorsed the Cornwall statement.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
copyrighted 2005

TZO VR ZKW FKZJKQPRO WK

WXDN GKQSO: VAW VR HR

WQTZNJKQPRO VH WXR

QRZRGDZB KJ HKAQ PDZO,

WXTW HR PTH IQKCR

GXTW DN: WXTW BKKO,

TZO TFFRIWTVSR, TZO

IRQJRFW, GDSS KJ BKO.

QKPTZN WGRSCR: WGK

Clue: C = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hebrews: Five Five



IMB VOLUNTEER SUMMIT

FOR CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE

First Baptist Church, Sherwood, Ark. • April 21-22, 2008

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- Explore prayer advocacy training
- Learn how to fund strategic mission involvement
- Examine using media in missions

HOMECOMINGS/ANNIVERSARIES

Friendship East Church, Charleston: 148th anniversary, April 6. Sunday School 9:45 a.m., Worship 10:45 a.m. Pot luck lunch to follow. J.G. Thomas, pastor.

Trinity Church, Pearl: 36th Anniversary, April 6, 11 a.m. followed by covered dish lunch. Concert by One Way following lunch. Danny Manasco, speaker; David McNeill, music; Kenny Goff, pastor.

Holly Springs Church, Holly Springs: Homecoming, March 16. Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Business Meeting 10:05 a.m., followed by concert by Tim Frith and the Gospel Echoes. Covered dish lunch.



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REVIVALS

First Church, Tunica: Revival, April 13-16. Sun. 11 a.m.; Sun.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Lunch service Mon.-Wed. at noon; P. J. Scott, speaker; Tom Young, music; Danny Smith, pastor.

Goodwater Church, Magee: Revival, March 30-April 2. Sun. 10:30 a.m. and 5:50 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. noon service/meal and evening service 7 p.m. W.A. Smith, speaker; Stephen McRight, music; Billy R. Williams, interim pastor.

Neely Church, Neely: Revival, April 6-9. Sun. 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Mark King, speaker; J. Wilbur Hall, pastor.

Calvary Church, West Point: Revival, March 31-April 2. Sun. 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Wed. Chalk Art by Keith Carpenter; Junior Davis, speaker; Larry Futral, music; James M. Towery, pastor.

First Church, Durant: Revival, April 6-9 at 7 p.m.; Bill Jackson, speaker; David Young, music. Ed McDaniel, pastor.

Central Church, McNeill: Revival, April 27-30. Sun. 11 a.m. followed by dinner on the grounds and 6 p.m. service; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Danny Lanier, speaker; Benji Rigney, music; Tues. 7 p.m., Children's Night; Wed. 5:30 p.m., Youth Night.

Friendship Church, McComb: Revival, April 4-6. Fri-Sat. 7 p.m.; Sun. 10:45 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Delio Delrio, speaker; Brandon Andrews, music; Laverne Summerlin, pastor.

New Salem, Caledonia: Revival, March 30-April 2. Sun. 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Jackie Kay, speaker; Slater Murphy, music.

Pineview Church, Hattiesburg: Revival, March 30-April 4. Sun. 11 a.m. followed by dinner on the grounds and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; James "Jipper" Williford, speaker; Phillip Butler, music; Douglas E. Benedict, pastor.

Steep Hollow Church, Poplarville: Revival March 30-April 2. Sun. 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Special prayer time 6:30 p.m.; Shannon D. Marshall, pastor.

Montevista Church, Eupora: Revival April 2-5. Wed.-Fri. 7:30 p.m.; Sat. 5:30 p.m. followed by fellowship meal. Daniel Hathorne, speaker; Stephen Prewitt, music; Jim Gore, pastor.

Benton Church, Benton: Revival. March 30-April 2. Sun. 10:30 a.m. followed by fellowship meal and 5 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Doug Broome, speaker; R.L. and Beth Sigrest, music; Charles Moore, pastor.

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Alive With Power

Ephesians 1:18-21; 2:4-9; 3:16-21

By Tony Martin

The Apostle Paul knew that his readers would need encouragement, and he encouraged through specific and heartfelt prayer for the believers.

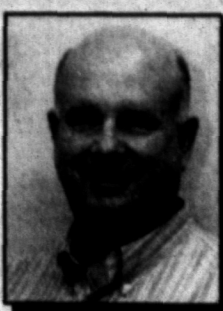
He begins in Eph. 1:18 with a prayer that "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened" (NIV). Paul wanted his audience to know the hope to which God had called them and the riches of God's inheritance. Christians can experience both hope in their current situations as well as a promise of a wonderful future.

Verses 19-21 speak of God's "incomparably great power," and "the power ... the working of his mighty strength" (NIV). Paul is speaking of the power that is available to all believers, and uses several different Greek words to communicate

his meaning: *dunamis* (as in dynamite); *energeia* (as in energy); *kratos* (mighty); and *ischus* (power).

This power was manifest in at least three ways. The power was expressed in Jesus Christ when God raised Him from the dead (v. 20). Second, all things were placed under Jesus' feet (v. 22). Third, Christ was appointed head of the church (v. 22).

To apply this, Paul wants us to understand that we are believers and part of the church - Christ's body, with Him as the head. Because of the connection between head and body, we can function properly as believers because we get our direction from Him. Apart from Christ, we cannot draw upon the riches with which He wishes to bless us. Paul explains that sal-



Martin

vation was given to us in the past, that we have a future inheritance as His saints, but that we can also experience His present power today to sustain and encourage us.

Ephesians 2:4-9 contain some of the most life-affirming words in all scripture. "But God ...," writes Paul, after spending some time in Eph. 2:1-3 discussing the fallen, wretched state of man. He then writes of God being rich in mercy, of his giving of agape love, of how God's grace is beyond our comprehension. Then in verse 5, he writes "[God] made us alive with Christ while we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved" (NIV). God could have destroyed all people because of their sin, but instead chose to express mercy and love. The picture here is of a person without life, without a pulse, truly dead, and incapable of doing anything for themselves (for what can a dead person do?) The only way a spiritu-

ally dead person can have a relationship with God is to be made alive. So God intervenes, giving that person life because of that life "spark" that He gave when Christ was resurrected. This is all given simply because of unfathomable grace. Paul states that even that belief that saves us is in itself a gift from God. Paul does want us to understand that none of this is because of our works or merit - it is not a reward for the good deeds we do, the prayers we pray, the acts of charity we share. It is from God alone, and that negates any reason for us to boast.

Paul prays for the Ephesians in 3:16-21, and by extension for all of us. He begins in v. 16, returning to his theme of "power," the power that God offers through His Spirit. We are to be strengthened in our innermost self, to give us the ability to overcome despair. The Holy Spirit, who gives this power, is available to all who claim the name of Christ. He is not some impersonal force, but a living presence who guides

us. Verse 17a continues by stating that that dwelling of God harnesses through faith.

Verse 17b speaks of how we are to be "rooted" (an agricultural term) and "established" (like a building) in love. Because of this, believers would have the "power" (*dunamis*, again) to understand just how vast Jesus' love is. It is ultimately beyond our understanding, but Paul seems to imply that to the extent that we can grasp it, our love for him and others will grow just that much more. He speaks of how wide, long, high, and deep God's love is, in an attempt to use frail and feeble words to express God's love.

Paul finally moves from understanding God's love to a prayer that we experience God's love, in v. 19. Again, he acknowledges that we can't understand it, but that we might be filled with life and fullness that comes from God. God does not want us to lack for anything in our relationship with Him.

Martin is Associate Editor of The Baptist Record.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Celebrating Easter's Significance

John 20:1-9, 15-18; I Corinthians 15:3-6, 20-22

By Marion D. Duncan

The first Easter began with Mary Magdalene returning to the tomb where Jesus had been laid just before sundown prior to The Passover. Mary Magdalene had a great capacity for love because Jesus had forgiven her of so much (Luke 8:2). She loved Jesus dearly and wanted to prepare His body properly for burial. But, she discovered an alarming situation-the stone had been rolled away from the opening of the tomb where Jesus' body lay. She ran to tell the others. Note: The other gospels record that Mary looked in the tomb, but did not find Jesus (Matt. 28:6, Mark 16:5, and Luke 24:3). Peter and John ran to the tomb to verify what Mary told them. John, probably the younger of the two,

arrived first. Warren Wiersbe suggests there is a spiritual lesson here: Peter had not yet reaffirmed his devotion to Christ, and therefore his "spiritual energy" was low. Isaiah 40:31 says that those who wait on the Lord "shall run and not be weary," but Peter had rushed ahead of the Lord and disobeyed Him. Peter's sin affected his feet (John 20:4), his eyes (John 21:7), his lips (He denied the Lord), even his body temperature (John 18:18). Peter and John found the linen wrap still in the form of His body and the folded facial cloth-all undisturbed. This would dispute that there had been a robbery of the grave. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, professed his belief right there that Jesus was, indeed, the Son of God and had



Duncan

risen from the dead! Mary remained at the tomb, and as she looked inside, she saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had been. Note: The other gospels refer to the angels as "men." They asked her why she was crying, and she told them that her Lord's body had been taken away, and she did not know where he was. Mary turned around and saw a man she assumed was the gardener, but it was Jesus. When He said her name in His tone and accent, she recognized who He was. John 10:3-4 reminds us that his "sheep will listen to his voice because they know his voice."

Jesus told Mary that she must not hold on to him-this would not be her final meeting with her Lord, and she had a job to do. She should go instead to His brethren and (1) let them know He honored their relationship even though they had fled in His darkest hour, and (2) they would be with Him forever because

they belonged to the Father (20:17). She carried the news, "I have seen the Lord," and told the disciples the things He had said. One might consider Mary Magdalene the first to tell the Good News!

The importance and power of the cross and humility of individuals are the purpose of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. The Greeks did not believe in the resurrection, but the Christians at Corinth did. They had become arrogant and prideful concerning their spiritual gifts which were given by God, not earned by them. Paul rebuked them for the error of their doctrine and practice, proclaimed that love would ultimately triumph, and declared the gospel. (The Royal Route to Heaven, Alan Redpath)

In I Corinthians 15, Paul established the proof and necessity of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In verses 3 and 4, he points out two foundations of the Christian faith: (1) Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, authenticated by His burial, and (2) Christ was raised on

the third day, authenticated by His appearances, including his own Damascus Road experience (15:8). In verses 9-11, Paul states the evidence, "But by the grace of God I am what I am..." (15:10).

A series of hypotheses (if/then statements) follows (15:12-19) verifying the truth "... Christ has indeed been raised from the dead..." (15:20). Paul connects the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the believers as "firstfruits" of what is to come. (Leviticus 23:10-11) Since Christ was resurrected and lives, Christians will experience resurrection, also. (15:23) "Christ has initiated a new order. Now resurrection is as certain as death." (Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary) The new order of exaltation follows in verses 24-28 at the end of which God the Father will rule for eternity. The revelation of this reign is rooted in Psalm 110:1. It will last until Christ's enemies are subdued (Psalm 8:6).

Duncan is wMu director at First Church, Starkville

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted. **Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.**

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

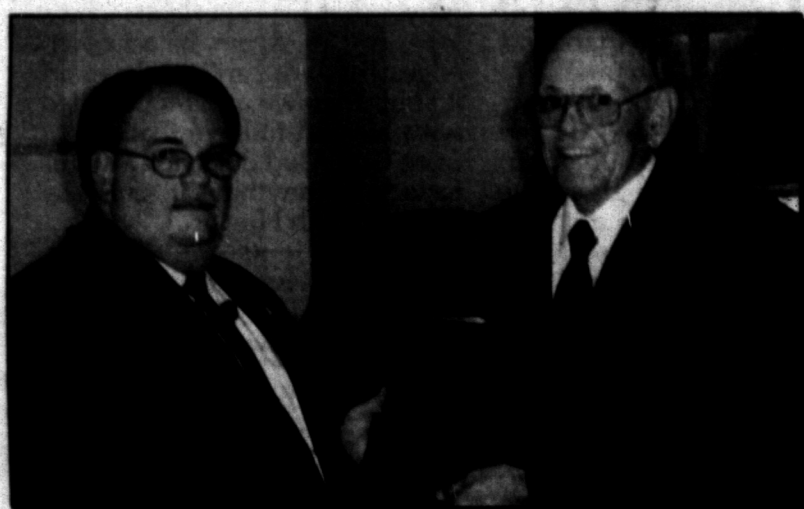
Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. River Bend Church, Aberdeen



2. Mission Hill Church, Wesson



9. Iuka Church, Iuka



10. Oak Grove Church, Meridian

1. A group from River Bend Church, Aberdeen, recently traveled to Mexico to assist missionaries. They took food, candy, and toys to an orphanage, painted buildings in the village, led a children's program, and assisted with a worship service. Shown are participants.

2. Mission Hill Church, Wesson, honored lifelong member Burdette Rutland on Jan. 13 for 60 years of service as a deacon. Pictured are Pastor Tommy Purvis (left) and Rutland receiving a special plaque.

3. Benton Church, Benton, will hold its Easter Worship Service at 7 p.m. on March 23. Will Wilkerson, pastor of Benton Methodist Church, will be the guest speaker. Fellowship meal will follow.

4. Immanuel Church, Greenwood, will present its Easter Cantata, I've Seen Jesus, on March 21 at 7 p.m. and Easter Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Nursery will be provided.

5. Kreole Avenue Church, Moss Point, will present the Easter musical, In Christ Alone, at 10:45 a.m. on March 23. Participating will be the Sanctuary Choir, Children's Choir, and Creative Movement Team.

6. Leesburg Church, Morton, Choir will present Easter - Based on a True Story, March 21 and 22 at 7 p.m.

7. First Church, Boyle, will celebrate its centennial on May 3-4. Guest pastor will be Ernest Sadler. Guest song director will be Clyde Luther Carraway. Cookout will be 4-6:30 p.m. on May 3, followed by Gospel performances. Celebration Sunday will begin at 10 a.m.

8. Bethel Church, Brandon, will present Clear Mountain Quartet on March 30 at 6 p.m. for Fifth Sunday Singing.

9. Iuka Church, Iuka, recently sent a team to work on the Mississippi Gulf Coast around the Bay St. Louis area. Shown are participants.

10. The Women on Mission group of Oak Grove Church, Meridian, makes baskets each month for patients of the Community Hospice in Meridian. Shown are participants.

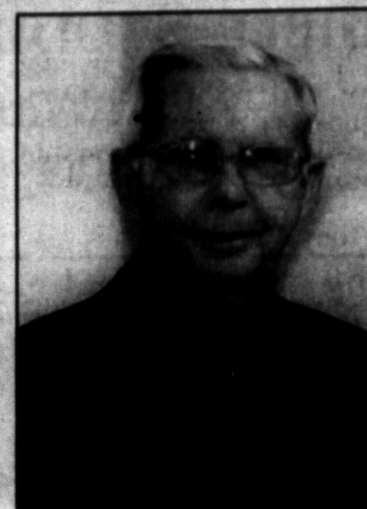
11. Zion Hill Church, Wesson, ordained John Branson as deacon on March 2. Pictured are Pastor Tom McCormick (left) and Branson.

12. Albert McMullen has completed 50 years in the Gospel ministry. Since being licensed by Carmel Church, Meridian, in 1958, he has served churches in Clarke, Scott, Neshoba, Winston, Lamar, and Kemper Associations. He has also served as a member of the SBC nominating committee, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and the board of trustees of New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife of 55 years, Janell, reside in Meridian.

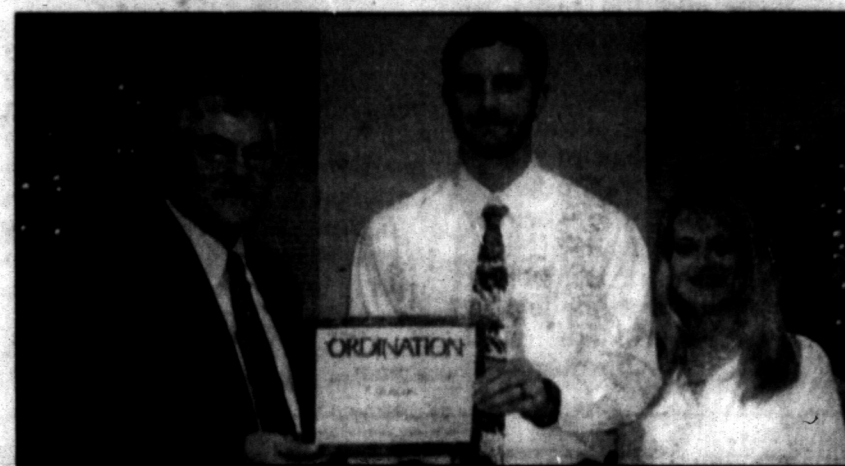
13. West Corinth Church, Corinth, ordained Jeremy Oakman as deacon on February 17. Pictured are (from left) Pastor Harold King, Oakman, and his wife Cherlyn.



11. John Branson



12. Albert McMullen



13. West Corinth Church, Corinth



15. Friendship Church, Brookhaven



16. GAs of Branch Church, Morton

14. Mt. Carmel Church, Carthage, will host Christ in the Passover with Rahel Landrum, speaking on behalf of Jews for Jesus, at 7 p.m. on March 21.

15. Friendship Church, Brookhaven, collected 136 cans of soup on Super Bowl Sunday. Pastor Chad Yarbrough is shown loading the soup for delivery to Brookhaven Outreach Ministries.

16. Girls in Action (GAs) of Branch Church, Morton, recently made birthday kits for the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Forest, as part of a mission project for world hunger emphasis. Pictured at Karleigh Mahaffey (left) and Chey Harrell.

17. Montevista Church, Eupora, will host a Gospel singing featuring Heavenly Journey, at 5:30 p.m. on March 30.